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PRE-BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - V

Western powers announce breakdown of preliminary Berlin talks: The three Western powers issued a communique on 14 January at the conclusion of the fourth Berlin site meeting announcing that the four powers had been unable to reach any agreement on the conference site, and that no date has been set for the next commandants' meeting. A French spokesman told the press that the breakdown followed a Soviet proposal that the four powers decide on the site of the first session and that the foreign ministers themselves decide where to hold further sessions. An American spokesman said the issue would now be referred back to the four governments.

The collapse of talks at this time may make impossible the completion of arrangements for the conference before 25 January, when the conference is scheduled to start.

Soviet propaganda attacks Western security plans: One of the strongest recent Soviet attacks on Western concepts of European security was contained in a 12 January Pravda article by Alexandrov. The writer charges that recent Western projects to guarantee European security are directed against the Soviet Union and were not even suggested until EDC became stalled. These new proposals were themselves based on the EDC concept and envisaged some type of mutual nonaggression guarantees between EDC or NATO and the Soviet Union. This scheme is described as a policy of playing one group of European states against another. In contrast to this, Alexandrov proposes the uniting of all European countries, regardless of their social systems, to avert the threat of a German militarist revival.

The theme of the threat of German militarism has been consistent in Soviet propaganda. Typical is an Izvestia article charging that Bonn is now planning on 25 rather than 12 divisions and that West German militarists would soon find the European community "too crowded" for their purposes. It concluded with a demand for a European security system, which would require eliminating the threat of a "rebirth of the German nest of aggression" and the creation of a united, peace-loving Germany.

State Dept. review completed

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